

CLUB CAPTAINS IN YOUTH SPORT

TRAINING PROGRAMME

CLUB CAPTAINS TRAINING INTRODUCTION

The Club Captain is an important role and a vital resource for any team and club; they are the link between the athletes and the coaching staff. A Club Captain is able to communicate the athlete view in many situations as well as being a cohesive force for team spirit and club development. When the role is properly understood, communicated and utilised the Club Captain can be fundamental to a successful season. The relationship between the Coach and Club Captain must be beneficial to both and allow for open discourse with a clear agreement in place. By supporting, communicating and effectively utilising their Club Captain the Coach can open up a new channel of developing athletes as players and people.

This training programme has been developed with the aid of European funding through the Erasmus+ programme. The training programme originates from an identified gap in the development of young people taking on certain leadership roles within sport. Sports clubs have previously appointed young people to positions of leadership such as the Captain role without providing clear guidance or information as to what the role entails. This programme has been researched and developed from work carried out with young people throughout and aims to fill the gap in providing a clear understanding of the role of a club or squad Captain. Each constituent part of this training is derived from the views and opinions of young people involved in sport.

The summary guide here gives an outline of the four sections in the training programme and is for reference. The training programme and its activities are detailed in the Facilitator Training Manual.

ROLE OF THE CLUB CAPTAIN

This section identifies the role of the Club Captain and informs participants about the qualities and responsibilities of a good Club Captain. The qualities and responsibilities are taken from the research workshops already conducted with young people, i.e. these are the qualities and the responsibilities young people have decided are necessary for a Club Captain.

The Club Captains seek to identify with a style of captaincy by looking at leadership quotes and discussing how that might relate to a leadership style. The quote(s) are used to provoke and prompt discussions within the groups and the Captains then reflect on how they would style their own leadership.

1 ROLE OF THE CLUB CAPTAIN

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATING WITH TEAM MATES, COACHES, MANAGERS, COMMITTEE

When an athlete becomes a Club Captain they become a communication channel between athletes in a squad or team and others involved in the club, such as coaching staff, the committee, officials, team managers, parents or facility staff. The types of any communication undertaken by the Club Captain should be determined within the final agreement between the coach and the captain. These following activities will help inform the Club Captain what extent they wish to communicate and who the communication should be with.

There may be topics or ideas that a Club Captain is asked to put forward as a representative of the other athletes. They will need the skills to introduce themselves, plan and prepare a reasoned discourse and then present this to the chosen audience.

Club Captains also become role models for other athletes in the club. This involves communication with a wide range of athletes, some of whom the Club Captain may not know very well. The Club Captain will be expected to behave and act in an appropriate manner whilst being aware of the boundaries of the code of conduct in the club. The Club Captain will need guidance in responding to behaviour outside the code of conduct and how to support the team or squad in managing negative behaviour.

MOTIVATING, SUPPORTING AND BEING INCLUSIVE

A Club Captain becomes a source for motivation or support and needs to understand and expect a synergy with their team, coach and club. The activity in this section explores what leadership is and what being a Club Captain means by understanding and examining resilience. Resilience is required by the Club Captain who may be required to support an athlete or team mate, and who in turn also requires support. If the correct support and processes are in place the Captain will be protected and resilient to the challenges of the role.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

This section allows the Club Captain to explore how to deal with conflict or problem issues that might arise in a club or team situation. There are some recurring issues to be aware of that are present in most club situations: struggling with training; not getting selected; others are talking about an athlete; an athlete doesn't like the Coach or Team Manager; the Coach is always on an athlete's case etc. The activity for this section involves examining how a Club Captain might deal with a conflict through role play with their peers.

CREATING AN AGREEMENT

This section deals with helping the Club Captain to create an agreement with their Coach. The Club Captain will need to agree boundaries for their role and identify the responsibilities they are comfortable with carrying out. The section is a reflective piece, thinking back on all the activities and discussions of the day.

NEXT STEPS ACTIVITY

After completing the Club Captains Agreement, the Captain should consider and discuss their next steps when their term of office has finished. Discussion topics should cover why Captains change, what is the role of the outgoing Captain in the handover, understanding the agreement and what a Captain might do with new skills and experiences.